

Watson (J. M.)

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

ON THE SUBJECT OF

EARLY MARRIAGE, &C.,

By JOHN M. WATSON, M. D.,

PROFESSOR OF OBSTETRICS, AND THE DISEASES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN THE
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NASHVILLE.

OCTOBER 31, 1854.



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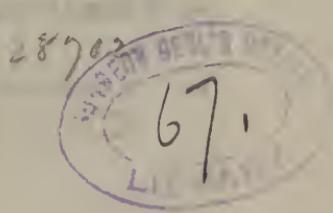
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CORRESPONDENCE.

NASHVILLE UNIVERSITY, NOVEMBER 1ST, 1854.

Prof. J. M. WATSON—*Sir:* We, the undersigned, committee in behalf of a large number of the medical class, beg leave to request a copy of your very able Introductory Lecture for publication.

Yours, very respectfully,

J. H. BUCHANAN, }
T. E. CLEERE, } Tennessee.
S. O. McDONALD, }
A. H. CAMPBELL, Wisconsin.
W. F. JORDAN, Alabama.
J. L. MILES, Mississippi.
ROWAN GREENE, Georgia.
JOHN WHITE, Kentucky.
N. A. MULKEY, Arkansas.
P. BROWN, South Carolina.
J. J. DOLLARD, Texas.

NASHVILLE, NOVEMBER 1ST, 1854.

Gentlemen:—Your very courteous note, requesting me to furnish you a copy of my Introductory Lecture of yesterday, has been received. In reply, allow me to say, while I am by no means insensible of the very flattering notice you have taken of my Lecture, I fear you have overrated its merits. A disposition, however, to oblige you, induces me in the present instance to comply with your wishes. The manuscript shall, in due time be placed at your disposal, while with sentiments of the highest regard, I remain

Very truly and respectfully yours,

JNO. M. WATSON.

Messrs. J. H. BUCHANAN, T. E. CLEERE, S. O. McDONALD, A. H. CAMPBELL, W. F. JORDAN, J. L. MILES, ROWAN GREENE, JOHN WHITE, N. A. MULKEY, P. BROWN, J. J. DOLLARD.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN—

The interesting relation of teacher and pupil begins with us to-day. A connection which I fondly hope will prove mutually agreeable. Nothing, I assure you, shall be wanting on my part to make it so, while I have every reason to believe the same endeavor will be made by yourselves. My constant aim will be to instruct you in medicine. Medicine, you know is a comprehensive term, embracing in a generic sense its *Materia Medica*, Chemistry, Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Surgery, Practice and *Obstetrics*. It will also admit of other useful subdivisions. I do not mean a doctor for every disease, but one for every important organ. When the Egyptians attempted this, the science of medicine was not sufficiently developed to admit of such specialities, or to test their advantages, but at present, I think it is susceptible of further subdivision. We have, however, no determinative authority for the like, and the doctor of one organ might not, in our country at least, be respected and patronized as he might deserve, however well he might be qualified to treat the particular disease of any special part.

We want some bold competent innovator to lead off in this matter, and demonstrate to the medical world, that success, fortune and fame can be acquired by that mode of practice. The general propensity to renounce all theory and not allow it any authority in medicine, along with the spirit of analysis, which prevails every where in the scientific world, will shortly give to all the vital organs an importance and consideration which they have not heretofore received. Each one will come up in that way for special investigation. The anatomy, phy-

siology, pathology and therapeutics, which appertain to any important viscus, would afford ample scope to the best powers of investigation for many years.

All of Harvey's fame is connected with the sanguiferous system; which doubtless had, for a long time, his undivided attention. Had he been engaged all that time as a general anatomist, physiologist or pathologist, it is very probable he would not have discovered the true principles of the circulation of the blood. The absorbents have given immortality to the name of Asellius, and the lungs to that of Malpighi.

The cerebro-spinal and ganglionic systems require much patient and undivided research. Some modern Harvey or Asellius, imbued with the analytical spirit of the age, may yet light up our dark pathway here, and thereby enable us to bring those nervous lesions, hitherto so intractable in subjection to therapeutic means.

But enough of this for the present. These hints, however, I hope will not be lost. I must now proceed more directly in my line of things.

It affords me unfeigned pleasure to welcome you, gentlemen, to the different departments of medicine, as arranged and taught here; especially to the obstetricy of this school. Three subjects, replete with interest and importance, have preceded mine to-day, and yet I have one to propose, which cannot fail to engage your attention. It is one which not only addresses itself to our understandings, but also to the best feelings of our hearts. The subject is WOMAN! and embraces her in her puberty, in her pregnancy, in her parturition, and in her puerperium; which, of course, includes her offspring. These things cannot fail to enlist your attention and feelings; a proper portion of your time and study will, doubtless, be cheerfully given to them.

I must be indulged in some general remarks before I treat of specialities. The early history of woman teaches us that she is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. She has inherited all that is good or evil of man; hence, both her physical and moral natures are identical with ours. Her sexual peculiarities it is true, give rise to many physiological and pathological differences, which constitute the basis of obstetricy. But

these things do not separate her in her moral or physical nature from man, but on the contrary, endear her to him by stronger ties than can exist between man and man! Hence, she has been and ever will be the beloved companion of man. Her well being, her evils, her joys and her sorrows, must, in one sense, be his also. This oneness cannot be violated without mutual injury. The man who disregards woman disregards himself.

It would be both instructive and interesting to trace woman's history among the different nations, past and present; in that way we might get a view of her in her civilized and in her savage states, see her in her elevations and in her degradations. Her history would reveal gross violations of her rights, in a shameful subjection to tyrannical control and drudgery! She has far greater cause to complain of man, than he of her! Very few nations have respected her rights and assigned a proper sphere of life to her. She has been misplaced, maltreated and degraded, but never entirely discarded by man.

The Jewish Theocracy placed her in an exalted relation to God, to man and to her offspring; and the principles and precepts of Him, who took flesh and blood from her, have done more to exalt, endear and establish her, in proper relations to man, and society, than all other things. Under these guidances we shall never see her the drudging slave of man, the degraded victim of lust; nor by fire immolating herself on her husband's tomb! History furnishes many bright examples of her patriotism, her heroism, and of her conjugal love, of religious devotion, of maternal regard and of sisterly affection.

Instances of this kind are too numerous for recital here; but not too much so for perusal; read them at your leisure, a perusal of them will be of service both to the heart and the head of any young doctor. It will not, I hope, be deemed irrelevant to speak a few words about woman as a *femina nupta*. I must present her to you in a matrimonial, as well as obstetrical point of view. As physicians we should not be content with our mere obstetric relations to her, but seek an early matrimonial union with her. This procedure is indicated by the very nature of our obstetric obligations to her. We must

regard her not only obstetrically, but also in her youthful adaptation to the great design of procreation, accordant with that physiology which peoples the world! Look at her sexual charms, her loveliness of person, her moral excellence, and heart replete with love for man; which when seen and felt cannot fail to excite, even in the masculine heart, a passion too lofty to be termed physical; it is a physico-psychological sentiment, known and felt the human world over—it is the *agape* of the Greeks, the *amor* of the Latins, and the good old English word *love*. It has a name, and a prominent one also, among all other nations, whether civilized or barbarian; it is the very noun on which children are exercised in their early grammar lessons in all countries where language is taught; and one, which the heart of the adult understands better than any other.

It is thus that woman becomes one with man again. A duality of sex is merged into a oneness of being, of heart, head and hand! They twain have become one! Thus man feels the force of the Divine truth, both in soul and body—physico-psychologically—that it is not good for man to dwell alone. The procreation of our species is the fruit of such strong laws both of soul and body, that they can never yield to celibacy without injury. God has ordained these laws in our moral and physical natures, and like those which govern the sun, moon and earth, in their relations to each other, must ever prevail.

I shall find no better time, than the present to speak of my *decided* convictions of the great advantages of early marriages. Yes, Gentlemen, I am in favor of early marriages—of the early marriage of professional as well as of non-professional men—of the rich and the poor—of the high and low. Do not let us waive the blessings of a wife merely because we are, or about to become doctors. Of all men in the world they have the greatest need of such a boon. And I urge the subject of early marriage on your consideration more especially as it is a fact, that both young and old doctors make the best husbands in the world. We feel almost authorized to say to those of other professions and avocations stand off until the doctors marry!

But to be more serious. Even students themselves should marry. No avocation whatever should be allowed to supersede the matrimonial law of our nature. Nothing, but hopeless natural defects, should hinder man or woman from marrying while young. The psychology and physiology of marriage may be demonstrated as follows: A young man falls in love with a young girl, and she with him—their love for each other is paramount to all regards entertained for others. This exclusiveness on the part of each shows that they are brought together in a bond of mutual love; which exists between them and them only, excluding all others. The young gentlemen present on this occasion have not to learn this from my lecture to-day, for it is something which has been felt by all of them—none, I presume, who have not been in love, and with the heart they believe my proposition. Who would be ignorant of this sublime movement of human nature? Such a person would want evidence in himself of his soul's existence. This mysterious ennobling movement of the heart is exceedingly delicate, and easily checked; it does not seem to cleave very strongly to our nature, and its soft and guiding influences are often perverted from gross motives of personal interests, policy or pride. Instead of taking its native way of matrimony, domestic happiness and religious hope, it chills and expires under passions which are "earthly, sensual and devilish." The fallen nature of man well nigh excluded love; it is capable only in its best forms of entertaining it. The law of love is the best bond of matrimonial connections; it is the one which God has ordained, and cannot be safely superceded by any others.

Happy is that man who can see and realize in some favored daughter what the poet's fancy did in the great mother—

"Grace was in all her steps,

Heaven in her eye, in every gesture dignity and love."

Nor is the following less in point.

"Ah! woman—in this world of ours,
What gift can be compared with thee?
How slow would drag life's weary hours,
Though man's proud brow were bound with flowers,
And his the wealth of land and sea,
If destined to exist alone,
And never call woman's heart his own."

Yes, gentlemen, in the language of another—

“The world well tried, the sweetest thing in life,
Is the unclouded welcome of a wife.”

Perhaps some young man would like to ask the question, should a student marry while prosecuting his studies? Yes, I would reply, if he has fully attained manhood. What, says another, encumber ourself at such a time? This enquiry, to my mind, is something like a student asking the question if he should encumber himself at such a time with a help mate, with happiness, with health, and character. I am sure marriage is the very way to secure these blessings, and youthful celibacy the way to lose them. If it be a fact that “celibacy is of the devil,” it must be the source of great evils—loss of character, of health; and it is the very basis of the brothel system in all countries. Hence, we had just as well call mutual help, health, moral character, and a good being an encumbrance as to say that a wife was. A wife an encumbrance indeed! He that says so, knows nothing of his best earthly interests. The student himself is far safer with a good wife than without one. His moral character, his health, his time, his future success in life, are all more certain with a wife than without one. The evils of marriage deferred, who can recount them? Shall I stop to do so? No; I should weary your patience, and introduce a subject which would require many lectures to set forth the one-half of them. Volumes might be written to great advantage on this subject, and I will not attempt a mere recital of them here; and, although they are kept too much in the back-ground of medical science, yet I shall not attempt to bring them forward here.

Marriage is, and should be regarded by all as paramount to all human policy, interests and avocations which involve protracted celibacy. The financier may say, it is wrong to marry until a fortune is made; the ambitious student says not until fame is acquired; and the calculating ones of all classes maintain that none should marry hastily. Now allow me to ask what, in the mean time, becomes of puberty? By what means shall its physico-psycological movements be brought into a state of abeyance? Shall the youth exclude

himself from society, lest he fall in love? Or shall he be convinced by argument that it is wrong for him to marry, when he feels the falsity of the proposition in his own person?

The wife can aid the financier in making money; can assist the ambitious student in acquiring fame; and can advance her husband in all the affairs of life. How often has the wife, by her needle, distaff, or other implements, aided her husband in making a professional start in life; sustained him with comforts in his affliction, or provided for a whole helpless family for months.

Early marriage, says one, may do very well, provided a good wife could always be obtained, to which I would reply, in a statement of the fact, that the age of puberty, youth and love, afford a better guaranty of a good loving wife, than age, interest and experience. It is true, the aged and discreet may strive to marry advantageously as to fortune, and select a wife as they would property of any kind, while conjugal love, domestic enjoyments, and woman's best support might be disregarded. Whenever a man can say of a clever woman:

"She is mine own;
And I as rich in having such a jewel,
As twenty seas, if all their sand was pearl,
The water neatar, and the rocks pure gold."

The fear of getting a bad wife, amounts to a distrust of one's self. Bad wives, I have found from observation, generally have bad husbands, and good husbands good wives. If a man marry with the resolve to make a good husband, and carry out that determination, he will be almost certain to have a good, grateful, and loving wife. With a good man there is but little risk in marrying; and even a bad man may be reclaimed by a good woman. So it is best both for good and bad men to marry. Our proposition admits of no exceptions only such as nature herself has made.

I have often been amused and mortified while reading the arrogant notions of physiologists and others in regard to the matrimonial periods which they assign to men and women. They presumptuously suppose that they can suggest a later and better period than that which is plainly pronounced in the moral and physical natures of each! An All Wise Creator

has ordained an epoch, the epoch of puberty, and the physiologists, whose duty it is to follow and maintain the course of nature, enters his protest against the light of his own science ! The physiologist turns moralist, and says secondary motives should take the lead of primary or natural laws ; that man should be governed in these things by reason and not by nature. He would thus array reason against nature ! Shall we prove by rational argument that the winds should not blow, or that the sea should not flow and ebb ? Moral and rational considerations should have their due weight, I admit, in deciding and controlling the psycho-physical laws of puberty : but are they not just such as those for which I have been contending—love and marriage ? The elevation of our species above all inferior creatures is recognized in them. These should have a controlling power, and may justly be termed moral or rational, and were ordained of God for the good of our race. Let puberty be subject to them, and not to the presumptuous teachings of the physiologist, or to the reckless course of wanton nature.

It may be asked, how long should puberty be established before marriage, following the unperverted order of nature ? I would answer, long enough for the development and seizure of the physiological passion, denominated love, and to admit of a proper term of courtship. The ancient Hebrews, after a betrothal of ten or twelve months, married young, as do the Jews of our day. The civil law places it at twelve years in the female, and fourteen in the male. It varies greatly in different countries and in different individuals. He that said, it was not good for man to dwell alone, certainly regarded the celibate as being in an unsafe state. The moral and physical dangers great as they are, to which celibacy exposes a young man, are appreciated only by a few. But this subject requires a volume, instead of a mere incidental notice, as in the present instance.

Puberty is often prematurely developed, and should not then be allowed the way of love and marriage, but should be subjected to wholesome restraint until fully matured. Unnatural ease, luxury, and vicious associates, do much to pervert these natural laws of the human economy. An excellent mono-

graph might be written on the subject, and placed in the hands of parents for the benefit of their children.

How dare the physiologist or moralist say it is wrong to marry at the age, when a reproductive physiology is plainly set up in his system? It is absurd, unnatural and wicked to do so. When matrimony is thus indicated, who dare forbid it, and thereby entail the evils of celibacy? Puberty is a declaration of our nature that we should then marry. The Creator himself in that way assures us it is right; and when God speaks in nature, or in any other way, let every man who says to the contrary be counted a liar!

Shall a man think less of himself because he is married? Shall he conclude that his pathway to fortune, fame, happiness and heaven is obstructed, because, forsooth, he has married a woman, his equal, his companion, the mother of his children, and the life of his domestic enjoyment? No, indeed, I reply, but would rather find the way cleared of many things which might hinder his progression in any of the foregoing directions.

Gentlemen, I now in conclusion of this part of my subject, assert, according to the highest authority on earth, it is not good for man to dwell alone. Hence I heartily congratulate that portion of my class who have already married; and have taken the way of love and marriage; the way of the Bible, of manhood, of fortune, fame and happiness.

I must now quit this part of my subject, with not the half told. I have given only a few broken hints about plain things, like the traveller pointing out, while in rapid progression, some prominent objects by the way-side, which can only be seen by virtue of their prominence. I might, indeed, detain you much longer at this point of my lecture, but I must desist.

The passage from marriage to obstetrics is natural and easy enough; but some preliminary remarks are necessary. Every great subject necessarily requires an introduction; it is a poor one, indeed, which does not. A proper regard both for the subject and for those to whom it is addressed, would be compromised by approaching this topic too hastily or carelessly.

Suffer a few words of advice right here. Allow age and experience to confer awhile with youth and inexperience. My particular duty is to teach you the science and art of midwifery. For us mutually to see clearly and feel acutely the responsibilities of our relations at this time, would afford the best guaranty of a faithful discharge of our respective duties. Obligations do not rest alone on your teachers; for, however faithfully and well you may be taught, close and un-wearied application will be necessary to enable you to profit by our teaching; otherwise it will be as water spilt upon the ground! Your presence, your aims, and your professional destinies, considered at this time, give these remarks a point of signification far beyond their common import. Constant, laborious study can only secure to you the foundation for future usefulness and distinction in your profession—two grand objects of laudable ambition—desired by all, yet not sought by all as they should be. I wish to enforce my remarks on this subject, lest you regard them as common-place. It is a common-place remark to say, it is ten or twelve o'clock—a mere announcement of the hour of the day or night, and is stale in one sense; but with those who have important business, and pending interests connected with these hours, the declaration of them rises far above its common character. So, the statement that this is the hour of youth, the time of study, and the opportunity of doing so, must gather force and point from present circumstances. There are some present, I hope, who feel that there are imperative duties, vital interests, and prospective fruits connected with the time of early life. I am well aware, both from experience and observation, how very difficult it is to impress on the young and inexperienced, the value of time, the worth of opportunities, and the necessity of close application. Self-government, self-aim, self-help, can be maintained only by a few; these things do not well accord with youthful life, and for their performance great strength of moral character as well as strength of mind are required. Who is sufficient for these things? Honor to the student who is able to renounce the pleasures of the moment for the prospective advantages of study. This point gained, and all other obstacles admit of easy removal. The

words of Horace may then be realized, "*Studio fallente labore...*" * Otherwise, study will ever be irksome and readily exchanged for useful pleasures.

There is no rest for the wise and useful man ! You should not think of a good physician without associating his life with labor, both of body and mind. I repeat there is no rest for the useful man in this world. Let me not alarm you ; the moral consideration of becoming useful, eminent and independent, should more than counterbalance all mental and physical labor, which a life of eminence and usefulness may involve.

I must not, gentlemen, leave you to learn, when it is too late, the great importance and responsible obligations of my branch of medicine. Now is the time, to-day, if you will hear kind words of admonition. Resolve never to enter on the practical duties of this department of your profession without a thorough knowledge of its scientific truths, its best artistic measures, and a proper sense of the moral responsibilities which attend the practice of midwifery. *Mens sibi conscientia recti* should be your motto here. Lose no opportunity, nor slight any means of learning this delicate and interesting part of your studies. Without a thorough knowledge of obstetrics you will be a dangerous practitioner in any community. Recollect its calls are urgent and immediate, demanding often prompt and skillful action. Besides the suffering parturient woman cannot always get the old family physician, and will have to send at such times for the young doctor. These occurrences may serve as passports or barriers to general practice ; you should, therefore, be prepared for them—ready to act, and prepared to act skillfully, let the case offer whatever difficulties it may ; the greater they may be, the better for your reputation, provided you are ready for such emergencies as may be successfully managed. Be entreated, then, to prepare yourselves for such trials of knowledge and skill. Such will come, and you must be prepared for them. Even a hasty sketch of the history of midwifery will confirm the remarks which I have just made on the practice of it. All those worthies whose names adorn the science and art of obstetrics,

and who have so ably and usefully distinguished themselves as obstetric practitioners, were men of close application; they were self-denying men, who did not sacrifice future good to present ease and enjoyments. Some are apt to conclude they were naturally great men; but I ask, could they have been great obstetricians before they learned obstetrics? Impossible. They, just like yourselves, had to study, hear lectures, and witness demonstrations, and to learn the very things which I shall now teach; without doing so they could not have been useful to others.

The very fact that this branch of our profession has become a distinct science, a useful art, and an honorable calling among the best communities, shows its great and vital importance. Besides, it has been studied, improved and practiced by men of acknowledged genius and professional greatness.

Its science, we see, affords scope to the best of minds, its art to the most skillful hands, and its character to great professional dignity. The necessity of all this may be seen in the state of the woman since the fall. The sentence, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" involves all that has or may be done for her in labor; a sorrow, it is true, which, in most cases, is soon forgotten for joy that a child is born into the world. But, alas! sometimes events occur which induce suffering and sorrow of the most distressing and dangerous kind—such as alarm, unavoidable accidents and death. These occur occasionally in despite of the best management of cases. The best skill must sometimes fail; and we must be subjected occasionally to great humiliation, thus incident to unavoidable failures. We must, however, learn not to acknowledge or admit any other kind but those which are admitted by all to be *unavoidable*. Its signal triumphs will compensate for all these trials, and show the worth and means of this art, which seems, in a Merciful Providence, designed to temper and soften down the curse pronounced against the Common Mother, and by her entailed on all her daughters.

The history of midwifery begins in a few vague things scarcely worth mentioning. The parturient woman often needed help, and in that way attracted attention and sympathy from those who were in attendance at such times. But

without a knowledge of proper means, little or no assistance could be given. Many absurd measures were adopted in early times. The Egyptian midwives did but little. Sacrifices were offered by some barbarous nations, to Ilythia or to Juno Lucina, during labor. Humiliating as is the confession, it must be admitted that these silly and now despised means, in their negation, would be better even now than an unskillful and hurtful employment of our boasted measures. Better, indeed, for the woman and for the practitioner to quit her bedside, leave her to her pains and groans, and go and offer sacrifice to Ilythia and invoke her aid, as did ignorant, superstitious barbarians of old, than to remain with her and give ergot in a wrong presentation, or in a disproportion of the head and pelvis, or at an improper period of labor. It would also be better than to inflict instrumental injury or manual lesions on patients.

Thus we have not only to acquire a knowledge of the numerous and well adapted means of relief, but also a thorough understanding of their practical employment. Shall I further admit that the parturient woman had better be left to her own resources than to fall into the hands of those who have learned the best modes of obstetric procedure, and yet do not know *when* and *how* to employ them? The practical sin of our art does not consist so much in a want of means as in a mal-administration of them. Our means, for the most part, when skillfully used, overcome nearly all the difficulties of labor. But I ask, who is sufficient for these things? When the reply is made, in view of the many positive and negative errors committed even in modern practice, it must be few—few, indeed—compared with the multitudinous host of obstetric practitioners; many of whom, save in a religious sense, had better be priests to Ilythia!

In all countries, whether barbarian or otherwise, midwifery was but little cultivated until about the third or fourth century, before the Christian era, when male midwifery began under Hippocrates to be cultivated. The Roman physicians practiced midwifery only in difficult cases. A manual of obstetrics has reached our time, which was written by Soranus and Moschion about A. D. 100. This science partook of the gen-

eral neglect and darkness of the middle ages. Schools were established in the twelfth century, but the Popes gave the professorships to monks, who were opposed to the study of anatomy, and midwifery made no progress of course in them. The art was retarded until about the era of Xylographic printing, in the sixteenth century. By means of printing, Grecian, Roman and Arabian works on medicine were multiplied and disseminated. The practice of this art was at this time in the hands of women; so completely so, that men did not engage in it; it was very perilous to do so. One Viites was, in 1451, condemned to the flames for practicing midwifery!

The study of anatomy, in 1543, greatly advanced midwifery. About this time anatomy was cultivated with great zeal and success, constituting a new era in medicine. Rousset, of Paris, about this period demonstrated the practicability of the Cæsarian operation on the living mother, in a treatise written on the subject.

In Germany this science remained in a low state, in consequence of being in the hands of women, who alone could practice it; while in France it was very common to call in the aid of physicians and surgeons.

Clement, a Parisian surgeon, who attended the mistress of Louis the XIV in her delivery, first received the title of accoucheur, as a title of honor.

In 1701, Henry of Holland, made a laudable and successful attempt to establish midwifery on scientific principles. In 1745, a school for midwives was established in France.

About 1760, Chamberlen, of London, invented the forceps. Though it is believed that as far back as the time of Hippocrates, a sort of forceps was known.

The subsequent establishment of several schools of midwifery gave great facilities to those who were engaged in the study. The science steadily and rapidly advanced to the state of perfection of which it now boasts.

I must forbear—my hour is out. I have not time to recite many illustrious names, nor tell of the wonders of ergot and chloroform.

